

Rozen, Kate - Member of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council - In Support SB1079

26 February 2023

Senator Cohen, Representative Lemar, Senator Hwang, Representative Kennedy and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, I would like to thank you today for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB1079 in my capacity as a member of the CT Commuter Rail Council. The items in this bill reflect our Council's thoughtful appraisal of feedback directly from riders. There are elements of this bill that are duplicated within SB1078 that I address more thoroughly in my testimony for that bill. For this specific testimony I would like to speak directly to the request for a system inclusive transportation mobile app, administrative support and the community connectivity grant program.

Connecticut is very lucky to have a robust network of rail and bus that will one day give every resident the easy choice of to swap out car miles for public transportation for all of their needs. To ease this necessary for our planet transition, we need to have a modern app that works with all modes from ticketing to knowing which bus connects from their train, what time it is arriving to what local rideshare system exists for first mile/ last mile connections. We need only look to other states who have implemented app systems. Mark Hallenback, a professor at the University of Washington who helped develop King County Metro's transit app system shared with the Commuter Rail Council the following, "OneBusaway (OBA) is open source, and continues to be updated. That code is the basis for New York MTA's Bus Time application but "under the hood" it is still OBA. It can be adopted by anyone who wants to use it, and has the skills to bring a version online for their agency."

The Commuter Rail Council would benefit from having financial and administrative support. The Council covers the cost of ownership and maintenance of a website. It would be of additional benefit to have presentation materials such as a screen and projector as our meetings resume more in person.

Finally, as Connecticut continues to improve its Community Connectivity Grant program, it is the Council's recommendation to support municipalities that specifically target the land around transit centers both bus and rail with sidewalks and bike infrastructure. Municipalities should be allowed to submit two Community Connectivity grant applications if one is specifically focused on improving the walkability and bikeability of their transit centers.

On behalf of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, I support the other aspects of this bill and urge this committee to vote to move it forward to the house and senate.

Sincerely,
Kate Rozen
Connecticut Commuter Rail Council
Member